



Transcript of Ambassador McCallum's remarks

9/11 Commemoration Ceremony - Ambassador's Residence

11 September 2006

The Prime Minister The Hon. John Howard; Members of the Diplomatic Corps; The Hon. Kim Beazley; Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston; The Hon. Alexander Downer; The Hon. Brendan Nelson; Mr. Kevin Rudd; Secretary Michael L'Estrange; Representatives of religious faiths; Representatives from the Public Safety, Police and Fire Services; Honored Guests, Members of the American Embassy family...

Thank you for joining with us to mark this solemn anniversary, this day of remembrance for that Tuesday morning five years ago when the world awoke to the unimaginable horror that we now call simply 9/11. The terrorist attacks that day took the lives of two thousand nine hundred and ninety-six women, men, and children, citizens of thirty-seven countries including Australia. Thousands more were injured. Today we gather to remember those lost and injured in New York, at the Pentagon, and in a field in Pennsylvania on that terrible day. We are here to honor them and to reaffirm our shared commitment to uphold the values and ideals that preserve freedom and liberty in the face of hatred and intolerance.

Each of us no doubt has our own memories and personal reaction to the events of that day and its aftermath. Prime Minister Howard was in Washington, DC that day and shared with our entire nation the shock, horror, and revulsion at this carnage. Shortly after 9/11, I witnessed first hand the surreal scene of destroyed buildings and debris at the Pentagon and at Ground Zero in New York.

If I think back on that day, I am struck with how quickly the promise of an ordinary day disintegrated into chaos - how the flawless blue skies of early morning over New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington ended in clouds in smoke and ash. But we should not and can not forget that early promise, that hope that began a new day, for our strength as a world community depends upon our willingness to work towards the bright promise that each tomorrow holds. We mourn the deaths, but we also remember the rescue worker, the police officers, the fire fighters, the emergency medical personnel, and countless ordinary citizens whose heroism, valor, acts of selflessness and courage marked that day. And we remember, too, with gratitude, how our friends around the world reached out to us in compassion and support. For these are the values that inspire and motivate us all. These are the ideals that we share. These are the values that keep us strong, that keep us committed, that keep us moving forward into the promise of that better tomorrow.

And now please face the flag and I ask for a moment of silence, in memory of those who perished and in honor of those who survived.

Each of us comes from a faith or a tradition or philosophy that informs us of a greater power, a greater good beyond ourselves. Whatever your faith, your tradition, your philosophy, please join me in reflecting on these events in your own way. As for me in accordance with my faith and tradition, I ask for God's blessing on each of the lost and injured, on each of their families and friends, and on each nation and family represented here today. And may God bless America.